

Commissioner's Weekly Field Memo
Friday, October 23, 2015

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Action Item Calendar

Today (October 23): [Enrollment](#) census due
Today (October 23): [Presidential Scholars](#) due
October 30: XQ [Super School](#) Advisory Committee due
November 1: [School safety](#) plan assurance
November 10: [Nonpublic](#) data due
November 12: [Graduation](#), dropout data
November 12: [Summer Exits](#) Through Enrollment Census
November 13: [graduating class](#), at-home, nonclassified
November 13: [At-Home Instructed](#) Students
November 13: [Non-Certified Staff](#) Report
December 4: Textbooks reimbursement forms due (see [below](#))

Notes from Commissioner Wagner

1. Council approves funding for 86 school-renovation projects in 18 LEAs

On Tuesday, the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education unanimously approved funding to kick off school-renovation projects that will spur the Rhode Island economy and ensure the health and safety of schoolchildren.

The funding for these projects comes from the capital fund of the School Building Authority, which Governor Raimondo launched in August to expedite the process for approval and funding of school renovations and repairs. The Authority received applications for 120 projects and was able to fund 86 projects from 18 LEAs. The total reimbursements for the approved projects will be \$19,347,079, toward a total cost for the projects of approximately \$24 million (the balance paid from local funds).

For so many Rhode Islanders, success starts in the classroom, and it is our priority to make our classrooms places where learning comes alive for kids. Thanks to Governor Raimondo, the members of the General Assembly, and the members of the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education for their commitment to improving the quality and safety of our classrooms and school buildings. We are fortunate to have leaders who understand that investments in education are an investment in our future. We are very hopeful that the General Assembly will continue to fund the School Building Authority, continuing the process of expedited approval and funding for building renovations and repairs.

2. Governor Raimondo establishes Working Group to review funding formula for education aid

Yesterday (October 22), Governor Raimondo established a Working Group to review all aspects of school spending and to recommend changes to the funding formula for aid to education.

The funding formula, signed into law five years ago, allocates state aid to public schools based on student enrollment, student poverty levels, and community wealth. The legislation that established the funding formula called for regular review. Through an executive order, Governor Raimondo asked the Working Group to examine whether the formula “is functioning as intended,” with a particular focus on funding for students with disabilities, for English learners, for career-technical education, and for charter public schools.

We are committed to developing options and opportunities for students and families, and to do so we need to provide resources and support for teaching and learning. We at RIDE are confident that the Working Group will come up with proposals to make education funding in Rhode Island more equitable, more responsive to local needs, and more supportive of great teaching and learning.

Thanks to the four heads of LEAs who have agreed to serve as members of the Working Group: Patti DiCenso (Pawtucket), Georgia Fortunato (Lincoln), Victoria Gailliard-Garrick (Davies), and Julie Nora (International Charter).

3. *Reminder:* Applications sought for XQ Super School Challenge Advisory Committee

Applications are now being accepted for a statewide advisory committee to support Rhode Island teams submitting proposals

for the XQ Super School Project, in which teams will come up with plans to design their own school.

The project notes: “Our mission at XQ Super School Project is to empower parents, teachers, students, politicians – all of us—to rethink high school.” They do so through communications and mobilization efforts, through rigor, and through galvanizing activities that “bring together all participants necessary to create change.”

We have challenged communities to form teams and to take on this exciting and important challenge. We are now encouraging others who would like to play an advisory role to apply to support teams as they prepare their submissions.

As the XQ Super School folks noted:

Rethinking high school is an audacious goal—no one can do it alone. We need your support to reach every innovator, creator, maker, and builder to join this movement.

There are many ways to get involved, and we hope you’ll learn more by visiting xqsuperschool.org and by downloading [these materials](#) that describe the movement.

If you are interested in being a part of the XQ Super School Challenge Advisory Committee, please send your resume and a short note explaining your interest by Friday, **October 30**, to:

info@ride.ri.gov.

For more information about the XQ Super School Challenge:

Explore the latest research.

Download resources and access expertise on school design. Start with modules on topics such as Students in the 21st Century, Youth Experience & Aspirations, and the Science of Adolescent Learning, at xqsuperschool.org/challenge.

Share what you learned with your colleagues and friends.

Let them know what excites you about this movement. And, consider sharing @XQAmerica on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#). Share your point of view on how you would [#RethinkHighSchool](#).

Join or start a team.

Tap your local networks or go to my.xqsuperschool.org. There you'll find the directory where people across the nation are raising their hands to help design the high schools our children deserve. (The Twitter hashtag is [#RethinkHighSchool](#).)

Watch and learn.

Visit our [Youtube channel](#) for videos on the history and necessity of rethinking high school. Share them with your network.

4. *Reminder:* Scholarships available for high-achieving high-school seniors with financial need, November 3 deadline

The Cooke Foundation offers the largest scholarships available to exceptionally high achieving, low-income students. Scholars receive up to \$40,000 a year to cover tuition, living expenses, books and other fees. Cooke Scholars come from every state with no restriction on background, race, ethnicity, religion, gender, political affiliation or citizenship status.

There is no nomination process, although each of the scholarships has rigorous eligibility criteria, including minimum GPAs and, in some cases, minimum standardized test scores. Financial eligibility for all of our scholarship programs require a student's family income generally not exceed \$95,000 per year. The average family income of Cooke Scholars is \$35,000 a year and many Cooke Scholars are eligible to receive Pell Grants.

In addition to assisting in covering tuition and expenses, Cooke Scholars receive:

- academic advising
- access to internship stipends
- opportunities to study abroad
- networking with alumni and community of scholars

Cooke College Scholarship:

This scholarship is available to 12th graders. Applications are due by **November 3**. The Cooke College Scholarship is an undergraduate scholarship available to high-achieving high school seniors with financial need. They may enroll in any accredited state or private four-year college and university.

Cooke Community College Undergraduate Transfer Scholarship:

The scholarship is available to community college students. Applications are due by **December 3**. The Cooke Undergraduate Transfer Scholarship makes it possible for the nation's top community college students to complete their bachelor's degrees by transferring to a four-year college or university.

Educators are obviously in the best position to help us get the word out about these scholarships. However, organizations that routinely have access to schools, school leaders, political officials and business leaders can help. Please visit www.jkcf.org/outreach to find more information about the scholarships. The Cooke Foundation encourages school systems in particular to share information about the scholarship with their students and families. Feel free to contact the foundation's Manager of Outreach Nara Lee by phone, at (571)209-1792, or by email, at nlee@jkcf.org, for further guidance about identifying candidates. Students and families can learn more by visiting www.jkcf.org/scholarships.

5. RIDE reminds LEAs of Health Department statement on HPV vaccinations and exclusion from school

As our schools and school nurse teachers continue to work toward vaccination of 7th-grade students against HPV, it is important to remind everyone of the message that the Department of Health sent to all school nurse teachers before the start of the school year:

The Department of Health is not interested in excluding children from school due to a lack of vaccination against HPV. If a child is not vaccinated against HPV and a parent or guardian of that child does not present a medical exemption form or chooses not to complete a religious exemption form, contact RI DOH for guidance (222-5960).

More information about the HPV vaccination and the exemption process is available here:

<http://www.health.ri.gov/diseases/hpv/>

From RIDE

Assessments:

6. Tentative 2015 PARCC results release schedule announced

We expect to make the results of the 2015 administration of the PARCC assessments will be available to schools and districts on or about November 9. The tentative release schedule is as follows:

On or about **November 9**: Schools and districts will be able to access the district and school aggregated reports and well as confidential student-level data files through the district exchange.

Please note: All PARCC results data will be embargoed until the public release scheduled for November 16, and *cannot* be shared with the public until this date and time.

The morning of **November 16**: Non-confidential results will be made available to the public (non-confidential results are those that do not contain any student-level information).

At the time of public release, the 2015 PARCC results information will be posted on the RIDE website, at:

<http://ride.ri.gov/InstructionAssessment/Assessment/AssessmentResults.aspx>

We plan to send individual student reports to LEAs between November 16 and November 20 for high-school tests and

between November 30, 2015, and January 8, 2016, for grades 3 through 8 tests.

7. LEAs must validate student registration, update testing details and personal-needs profiles for PARCC assessments

RIDE will be performing the initial import of student-registration data for the 2015-16 school year PARCC assessment using the data submitted to eRIDE. It will be the your responsibility to validate the student registration, update the testing details and the personal-needs profile data in the new student registration & personal needs profile (SRI/PNP) data file. If you have questions regarding the PARCC technology, please contact Greg Martin, at Gregory.Martin@ride.ri.gov or 222-8495.

8. *Reminder:* Fall Block Testing trials should be under way within the next few weeks

Those schools participating in Fall Block Testing should be conducting infrastructure trials in the next few weeks. Almost every aspect of the testing technology is new or significantly updated. The most recent technology bulletin has a technology-readiness section that you should review. If you need any assistance or if you have questions regarding the testing technology or would if you would like someone from RIDE to be onsite for your infrastructure trial, you can contact Greg Martin, at Gregory.Martin@ride.ri.gov or 222-8495.

Textbooks:

9. RIDE requests reimbursement forms for nonpublic school textbooks by December 4 – *Action Item*

With funding from the textbook-reimbursement fund established by RIGL 16-23-3.1, RIDE will reimburse LEAs for any English language arts, history, or social studies textbooks on the approved 2015-16 Textbook List. A single reimbursement payment will be made in February. For reimbursement, please complete the Fiscal Year [2015-2016 Textbook Verification Form](#) and submit the form to us by **December 4**.

Webinars and Training:

10. EPSS webinar for district configuration administrators (DCAs) scheduled for Thursday

RIDE will offer a webinar on **Thursday** (October 29), at 2 p.m., for all district configuration administrators (DCAs). During this webinar, RIDE will review how to add and remove people from EPSS and will share some common troubleshooting issues. If you are new to the DCA or data-manager role or would like a refresher on how to add or delete people from EPSS, please register for the webinar [here](#). If you have questions about the webinar or who should attend, please e-mail Lauren Matlach. at lauren.matlach@ride.ri.gov.

Data Collection:

11. RIDE announces changes to helpdesk

Starting on Monday (October 26), we will no longer be monitoring the Helpdesk@ride.ri.gov email inbox. Those emails will be automatically directed to our helpdesk partner and an incident ticket will be generated.

If you have any questions about this change, please submit a helpdesk ticket, at: <https://support.ride.ri.gov>.

12. RIDE urges LEAs to ensure that all collection codes are included in their discipline-data reports

It has come to our attention that not all Student Information Systems have been updated to reflect all of the changes made to the discipline-data collection codes over the past few years. In particular, several LEAs do not appear to have the three weapon codes that were added for the 2014-15 collection [specification](#). Please review your system to ensure that all of the necessary codes appear in your reference tables.

If you have any questions about the discipline-data collection, please submit a helpdesk ticket, at: <https://support.ride.ri.gov>.

13. RIDE provides data-collection updates

As of Thursday, RIDE has had 100 percent of all LEAs submit their enrollment data. The October 1 enrollment snapshot is based on the enrollment data collected. These data are used for federal and state reporting, including funding LEAs. This is why it is critical to have the enrollment data submitted in a timely fashion.

Only 84 percent of LEAs submitted their Teacher-Course-Student (TCS) data. The TCS data are used for state reporting, assessment (PARCC student registration), accountability, teacher evaluation, and instructional support, among other things.

Just 38 percent of LEAs of those eligible have submitted their dual/concurrent enrollment data. This data collection supports Governor Raimondo's plan to pay for students to earn college credits while enrolled in high school. The first snapshot of this

data for comparison to Postsecondary Education enrollment will be taken on October 31.

14. *Reminder: RIDE announces changes to data-collection process*

Starting with the October Enrollment reports (Submission and 10/1 Snapshot), we will no longer be accepting the signed reports via fax. The report instructions have been updated to display the eRIDEinternal@ride.ri.gov email address to which you should send the signed and scanned report.

If you have any questions about this change, please submit a helpdesk ticket, at: <https://support.ride.ri.gov>.

15. *Reminder: RIDE urges LEAs to enter enrollment data regarding dual, concurrent enrollment*

The Dual and Concurrent Enrollment in Postsecondary Institutions collection is a daily collection. LEAs report to RIDE through the Enrollment Census collection information regarding students who are concurrently or dually enrolled in your LEA as well as at a postsecondary institution.

It is important that the students who are dually or concurrently enrolled be entered into your enrollment data as soon as possible. State reporting and tuition reimbursement depend on this information.

If you have any questions about the dual/concurrent enrollment data collection, please submit a helpdesk ticket, at: <https://support.ride.ri.gov>.

16. *Reminder:* Several data collections are open or due in the next month

The following are the data-collection deadlines for November:

- November 10: [Non-Public Schools Attestations - Due](#)
- November 12: [Graduate and Dropout Reporting via Enrollment Census - Due](#)
- November 12: [Summer Exits Through Enrollment Census](#)
- November 13: [At-Home Instructed Students – Due](#)
- November 13: [June Graduating Class Fall Membership - Due](#)
- November 13: [Non-Certified Staff Report - Due](#)

Information about upcoming data collections can be found on the [data collection calendar](#). Weekly collection [webinars](#) provide details regarding upcoming collections, along with a question-and-answer period.

From the U.S. Department of Education

17. Secretary Duncan issues letter on resources available to better serve undocumented students

Education Secretary Arne Duncan discusses available resources that educators and school personnel can use to better serve and support undocumented students in secondary and postsecondary settings in this letter:

<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/secletter/index.html>.

From other organizations

18. Grants available for central-office redesign to prepare all learners for college, careers

The Nellie Mae Education Foundation is proud to announce the launch of a new grant fund called *Preparing All Learners: College and Career Readiness Through Continuous Improvement and Central Office Redesign*. We believe that adopting continuous improvement practices and creating central office designs that support the larger purpose of college readiness for all can position districts to systemically implement [student-centered learning](#) (SCL) practices, and thus achieve greater educational equity and deeper learning for all students.

Through this grant fund, we are seeking New England public school districts with a commitment to SCL and educational equity that have successfully piloted or implemented continuous improvement models in their K-12 systems and central office redesigns to support the larger purpose of college readiness for all. Our hope is that grant funding will help accelerate and expand promising continuous improvement and central office redesign efforts. Additionally, we hope to learn from these efforts, capture learnings and best practices, and share these findings with the field to support and accelerate the spread of systemic student-centered secondary education throughout New England.

The application deadline is **November 10**. For more information, go to:

[http://www.nmefoundation.org/grants/grant-opportunities-\(1\)](http://www.nmefoundation.org/grants/grant-opportunities-(1))

19. Grants available to advance STEM education in high-poverty schools

The Verizon Foundation launched the Verizon Innovative Learning Grants in 2014 to accelerate innovative learning opportunities for teachers and students. The Verizon Foundation is again looking to partner with K-12 public schools to improve student engagement and achievement in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) for the current school year.

Through the Verizon Innovate Learning Grant program, schools will be eligible to apply for \$20,000 grants to:

- launch or accelerate STEM programs that incorporate experiential learning;
- train teachers on the effective use of mobile technology to help increase student achievement; and
- create more personalized learning environments to help students succeed.

Teachers and faculty members representing any public elementary, middle, or high school in the United States in which at least 70 percent of students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch are eligible to apply for a chance to win a Verizon Innovative Learning Grant. This grant helps schools in significantly underserved areas to expand or build new STEM initiatives that leverage technology for their students.

If you are interested in submit an application to bring new learning to students in your community, please contact Michele Cinquegrano, at michele.cinquegrano@verizon.com, for more information. The deadline for applications is **November 9**.

20. Rhode Island Foundation offers three-year grants to stimulate solutions to Rhode Island challenges

The Rhode Island Innovation Fellowship from the Rhode Island Foundation, made possible through the vision and generosity of philanthropists Letitia and John Carter, is designed to stimulate solutions to Rhode Island challenges.

Rhode Island Innovation Fellows receive up to \$300,000 over three years to test and implement innovative ideas that could dramatically improve an area of life in Rhode Island. Two Fellows are selected annually.

An information session is scheduled for **November 10**. For more information, see:

<http://www.rifoundation.org/TransformingRhodeIsland/RhodeIslandInnovationFellowship.aspx>

RIDE will post this field memo on Tuesday, at:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/InsideRIDE/FieldMemos.aspx>